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Editorial

Ecosophy: The wisdom of the household

We ought not to conflate information or intelligence with wisdom. Many of the high-school students that I tutor are very intelligent, but none of them are wise. Many of the undergraduates that I taught in my previous incarnation were intelligent, but few of them were wise.

Observing the collapse of the global economy (preceded, of course, by the on-going collapse of ecosystems globally), I have come to understand that many of our political, economic, and social leaders are not wise. Those who are wise are often ignored, it seems, because wisdom may run counter to knowledge.

Conservatives and fundamentalists have no need for wisdom, since they operate from positions of certainty. Mr. Limbaugh and his colleagues know that anything that appears to them as liberal or socialist is by definition, wrong. And to be ecumenical, the members of Hamas and Hezbollah, also know what is wrong or evil.

Of course, such positions do not allow for adaptation to change. The whole world seems bent on restoring the very economic system that collapsed. It seems that there is a concerted effort to make the future identical to the past.

I suspect that this is the result of too much information and not enough wisdom. Information can be complex and convoluted. Wisdom tends to be simple and direct.

Rabbi Hillel: “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole of the Torah; the rest is explanation; go and learn.” That is wisdom emerging from a lifetime of experience and skill.

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